INFORMATION LINK

Information Services Division

Client Server

AD-HOC COMMITTEE FOR INTE-GRATION IS DISBANDED
Vern Welder

In November, ISD began meeting with a group of our customers to discuss the need for development software that provides for integration of WWW applications, fax, telephone, e-mail, databases, and inte-grated voice response. That ad-hoc committee was formed after Edify Corporation presented their integrated development solution at the Bank of North Dakota.

At our December meeting, we determined that the Bank of North Dakota was the only customer with an immediate need, so the committee was disbanded. ISD will continue to work with the Bank of North Dakota to meet their integration needs.

SENDING WWW FEEDBACK

I have been monitoring and responding to some of the e-mail feedback that we receive via the North Dakota State World Wide Web home page. A common problem I see is that individuals request-ing information do not provide a return e-mail address for the information to be sent back. Always provide your e-mail address on WWW feedback messages. If you are requesting that information be mailed to you via the postal service, provide your mailing address as well.

Please verify that the e-mail address you enclose is correct. It is very frustrating to the responder when they research and compose a response only to find that the e-mail address provided does not exist.

Information Resource Center

NEWS READERS
Sam Stoxen

ISD has made arrangements for you to join what is known as "The Biggest Bulletin Board in the World," Network News. To do this you point your News Reader at news.bsmr.uswest.net. You can find news groups on various functions regarding your job duties. The first thing you need is software. The software under Windows 95 and Windows NT is easy to find (and free) if you get the current 3.x Internet Explorer from Microsoft. Also, there is a reader in the Chameleon product that works just fine. There is a free product you can get from TOCOWS WWW site called 'Free Agent News Reader' that works under Windows, Windows 95, and Windows NT. There is one with Netscape that works, but they expect people to pay for using their product.

Where should you start? The best place to start is with areas that tell you about Net News itself. Start with news.announce.newsusers, news.misc, or news.users.questions. Remember, it should be work related. We need to keep the Elvis sightings to a minimum and use these tools for work related functions. Remember, there are tools to monitor what people are doing on the Internet from their desks. Read PC Today, Internet World, or any other magazine that is running articles related to this topic. Every agency should have adopted a policy on acceptable use.

TIME SAVERS IN EXCEL AND WORD
Esther Norgard

There are a couple of great time savers in Excel and Word that can save you a lot of time and work.

In an Excel spreadsheet, to format your columns to be wide enough to accommo-date their contents, you could choose Format, Column, and AutoFit Selection. A quicker way is to just double click on the border between the column headings. For example, if column B has entries of different lengths and you want the column to be just wide enough for the longest entry, double click the line between Column B and Column C (the mouse changes to a two-headed left-right arrow). The same is true in a Word table, but you don't have to be at the top of the column. Double clicking anywhere on the right border of the column to be formatted does the same thing.

Another time saver that works in both programs is using the F4 key to repeat your last action. If you're entering numbers or text, or formatting parts of a spreadsheet after finishing the entries, F4 repeats your last action. For example, suppose you select a range and apply currency formatting to the numbers. Before doing any other type of formatting, select a different range and press F4. It will repeat your last formatting action, making the second selection currency-formatted. Word for Windows works the same way. You can repeat your last action until you perform another action, except moving the insertion point. You can insert the same text repeatedly anywhere in your document or duplicate formatting instruc-

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tions by pressing F4.

These shortcuts are easy to use and can cut down considerably the time spent formatting a file!

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN ND STATE JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS?
Gary J. Vetter

If you have an e-mail account, it is now possible for you to receive free copies of ND State Job Announcements. Each time an announcement is released by the Central Personnel Division, a technology known as LISTSERV automatically creates a message and routes it to everyone subscribed to the service. It appears in your existing e-mail client just as any other message would. And because the message is in 'text' format, it can be easily viewed and printed without any type of file conversion.

To become a member of this service, simply send an e-mail message to "listserv@pioneer.state.nd.us" with the phrase "SUBSCRIBE ND-JOBS *First-name Last-name*" in the message body. Do not include any quotation marks and use your real name in place of "*First-name Last-name.*" Be sure that no additional text, such as a signature, is included in the message body. A few minutes after sending your message, you should receive a confirmation message indicating that your request was processed successfully. From that point on, each ND State Job Announcement released by the Central Personnel Division will be sent directly to your e-mail account.

Please also note that a listing of all open ND State Job Announcements is available from the "General Info. and Services" section of the ND State Government World Wide Web Home Page (http://www.state.nd.us).

5x86, 6x86, AND PENTIUM . . . WHAT DOES MHZ HAVE TO DO WITH IT?
Dean Glatt

This article attempts to briefly explain the numbers that you see labeled on PC advertisements and provide a basic understanding as to what you are getting when you purchase a computer. Bigger numbers do not necessarily mean faster performance.

Competing microprocessors from AMD, IBM, and Cyrix manufacture "clone" processors that challenge Intel's Pentium. You might have noticed that Intel does not call their Pentium chip a "586." That is due to technology license contracts in which AMD, Cyrix, and others have rights to the x86 technology. Calling their new design a Pentium and not a "586" released Intel from contractual obligations to give AMD, Cyrix, IBM, and others the x86 technology.

The 5x86 uses many Pentium type features to achieve performance equal to Pentium processors, but retains its 32-bit base design. The processors offer low-end Pentium-level performance. A 120 MHz 5x86 performs on par with a 90 MHz Pentium processor even though it is much faster at a given clock speed than the Pentium.

The 6x86 uses the new "P" rating system which rates a PC's overall performance relative to the Pentium. It is a 64-bit design like the Pentium. Cyrix de-emphasizes clock speeds in its marketing and instead relies on this rating. For example, a processor with a P150 rating would have performance comparable to a 150 MHz Pentium processor, regardless of its actual clock speed. With the P-rating in place, a PC buyer can easily evaluate all personal computer processors for a given performance category — without knowledge of the different designs in processors. The "P" rating in my opinion is a good thing when looking for overall performance of a PC. Tests show that the Cyrix 6x86 is the fastest chip in the Pentium class.

Today's buyers can buy a 6x86-based PC now, with a guaranteed upgrade path to future technology that includes multimedia extensions (MMX) and further optimized for 32-bit software such as Windows NT. What I want to emphasize here is that if you decide to purchase a 6x86, it is no less technology than a Pentium. It is a different technology that does the same thing.

The 6x86 is compatible with x86 software and all popular x86 operating systems including Windows 95, Windows, Windows NT, OS/2, DOS, and UNIX. Additionally, the 6x86 processor has been certified "Windows 95 compatible" by Microsoft and was designed to run existing 16-bit software as well as the latest 32-bit software just like the Pentium.

This might also help explain why in testing it is found that the Pentium is on par with the Pentium Pro on the performance scale under Windows 95. The Pentium Pro in a nutshell is optimized to run true 32-bit operating systems such as Windows NT and IBM's OS/2. Keep in mind that Windows 95 still contains a fair amount of 16-bit compatibility instructions, which the Pentium is quite adept at handling, but the Pentium Pro is not. Unless an application such as WordPerfect is written specifically for Windows 95 or NT, it is probably a 16-bit application. Under a true 32-bit OS like Windows NT or OS/2, the Pentium Pro's performance can shine if it is running all new 32-bit applications such as Microsoft Office97.

Data Processing

DP CORNER
Joe Wolf

In an effort to provide more resources to assist with the workload in the Development Section, ISD has contracted with two consulting agencies. Anstec, Inc. and Legacy Solutions have placed several contract programmers in our agency and plans are to bring several more on board in early January. ISD has developed a modified training agenda for the contract programmers due to their previous experience in the programming field. Contract programmers are currently assigned to the Year 2000 project.

Twenty two members of our development staff (programmers and analysts) are now located at Northbrook Mall. The move was made in an effort to get our staff closer to the consultants and Human Service staff that are working on the Welfare Reform Project.

The mainframe downtime schedule for 1997 has been sent out. We will continue to bring the system down two Sundays a month for hardware and software maintenance. The system may occasionally be brought down on a week night to correct a problem that can't wait until the next scheduled downtime. During this downtime, all applications on the mainframe will not be available. As a reminder, we will broadcast a message as to when the system will be down.

The last couple of weeks have been a busy time for the development and technical services staff. We have been working with the legislative DP staff to ensure the applications are tested and ready for production. On the system software side, we have stabilized the system and do not plan any major software upgrades during the session.

operating the official "Primary" DNS server for all of North Dakota state government. The DNS platform is a dedicated Gateway2000/P5-120 running Microsoft's NT4.0 DNS server software. It is NetID that helped make this service possible. The DNS database is built and directly exported from NetID, eliminating the need for two separately managed databases. The official operational date for the DNS server was December 9 and its IP address is "165.234.120.40" with a name of "ns1.state.nd.us". The official "Secondary" DNS server is now "134.129.107.194" with a name of "ns1.nodak.edu". Please remember to update any of your TCP/IP clients to incorporate these changes.

If you are an IP administrator and would like to verify your NetID/DNS entries, you can contact the Support Center and request an export of your zone(s). Keep

in mind that the NetID database is not only for ISD's use, but also to aid anyone who has questions about items surrounding assigned IP addresses.

RATE CHANGE
Mike Ressler

Information Services Division lowered the central computer disk storage rate of 5 cents per track to 4 cents effective December 1. The growth in our customers' disk storage along with the newer technology of disk architecture are the main factors for the rate decrease. This decrease will save state agencies $182,000 for the remainder of the 95-97 biennium.

Telecommunications

MANAGING IP ADDRESSES
Glen Rutherford

Over the last several months ISD has been building an IP informational database on Oracle. Each entry in the database provides specific information associated with an IP address. The interface to the database is supplied by ISOTRO Network Management Inc. (http://www.isotro.ca) and is called NetID.

ISD's Support Center is equipped with a NetID client on each of its workstations and provides for the day-to-day administration of all the IP address adds, updates, modifications, and removals. The information supplied to the Support Center is provided by a representative which has been delegated as the agency/department IP administrator. Some of the related information that NetID tracks are MAC addresses, end users, device locations, and domain names. This information has proven to be very useful and becomes essential when troubleshooting network problems. We have just recently completed transfer of all IP records to the on-line database, which is now approaching 4,000 entries.

As you may be aware, ISD is now

Records Management

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR AGENCY'S RECORDS
Sharon Freeman

The Records Management program for the State of North Dakota was established on July 1, 1961, with the enactment of Chapter 54-46 of the North Dakota Century Code. This statute states the state records administrator shall establish and administer a records management program in all agencies in the executive branch of state government.

The basis for a records management program is the records retention schedule. The records retention schedule lists all of the record series retained in an agency, along with their retention period. The retention period takes into account the administrative, legal, fiscal, and archival values.

It is crucial for state agencies to follow their established records retention schedule and retain records only for the stated retention period. Retaining records longer than the stated retention period is a direct violation of North Dakota Century Code 54-46-05. Records must be disposed by the method listed on the retention schedule, such as landfill, shredding, burning, or transferring to the State Archives.

Tampering with public records, which includes taking records to an employee's home after the record has satisfied the retention requirements, is a violation of North Dakota Century Code 12.1-11-05. A person is guilty of tampering with public records if he/she knowingly makes a false entry in or false alteration of a government record; or knowingly, without lawful authority, destroys, conceals, removes, or otherwise impairs the verity or availability of a government record. The offense is a class C felony if committed by a public servant who has custody of the government record; or a class A misdemeanor if committed by any other person.

Your responsibilities as a custodian of public records includes maintaining the records according to your agency's record retention schedule and completing your annual record disposal.

ISD EMPLOYEE PROFILE

Name: Chuck Schreiber

Job Title: Technical Services Manager

Job Responsibilities: Overall supervision of Tech Services, Operations, Data Entry, Micrographics, and Production Control.

Years of Service: 16

Educational Background: 1980 - Associates Degree in Computer Programming, NDSSS, Wahpeton, ND

Who do you consider to be your customer? Anyone who utilizes the state's information resources, along with all of their customers.

New State Home Page

Check out the new North Dakota State home page at http://www.state.nd.us.